

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PFOR, US, UR

SUBJECT: ANNUAL US POLICY ASSESSMENT FOR SOVIET UNION

REF: MOSCOW 4403

1. ANNUAL POLICY ASSESSMENT FOR USSR WAS DISCUSSED AT MEETING CHAIRED BY HARTMAN WITH PARTICIPATION OF ARMITAGE AND VINE, EUR/EX, S/P AS WELL AS ENTIRE EUR/SOV STAFF. BOTH POLICY OBJECTIVES AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION WERE DISCUSSED. THIS TELEGRAM REFLECTS SOME OF QUESTIONS WHICH WERE RAISED AT MEETING AS WELL AS THINKING OF OTHER ELEMENTS OF DEPT. SOLICITED SUBSEQUENTLY IN PROCESS OF DISCUSSING POLICY ASSESSMENT. IT IS NOT INTENDED TO BE A POLICY DOCUMENT BUT ONLY TO STIMULATE FURTHER DISCUSSION OF ISSUES AS EMBASSY CONSIDERS APPROPRIATE. WE RECOGNIZE THAT CONSIDERABLE TIME HAS PASSED SINCE THE EMBASSY ASSESS-
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MENT AND DEPARTMENT'S MEETING, AND THAT SOME OF THE QUESTIONS RAISED HAVE TAKEN ON DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS SINCE THEN.

2. GENERAL VIEW EXPRESSED AT MEETING AND IN SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSIONS IS THAT ANNUAL POLICY ASSESSMENT IS EXCELLENT REFLECTION OF CURRENT US POLICY OBJECTIVES AND PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS ACHIEVING THEM. THERE WAS MORE DISCUSSION OF WHERE WE SHOULD BE HEADED IN THE YEAR TO COME AND PARTICULARLY OF THE DIRECTIONS SOVIET POLICY MIGHT TAKE AFTER CSCE AND A WASHINGTON SUMMIT ARE BEHIND THEM.

3. EMBASSY SUGGESTED THAT PROGRESS IN SALT IS SEPARABLE FROM OTHER ASPECTS OF US-USSR RELATIONSHIP THOUGH NOTING THAT DOWNWARD SPIRAL IN OUR RELATIONSHIP COULD PREVENT RATIFICATION OF ANY SALT AGREEMENT. BEYOND THIS, WE SUGGEST THAT SALT NEGOTIATING PROCESS IS BUILT ON BASIS OF INCREASING CONFIDENCE IN EACH OTHER'S BEHAVIOR WHICH MAKES BOTH SIDES SATISFIED WITH STABLE STRATEGIC EQUILIBRIUM. SHOULD ATMOSPHERE OF RECURRENT CRISES RETURN IT IS QUESTIONABLE HOW LONG EITHER SIDE WOULD BE WILLING TO FOREGO DRIVE FOR STRATEGIC SUPERIORITY, HOWEVER ELUSIVE A CONCEPT THIS MAY BE. A FAILURE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON SALT II COULD HAVE A FAR-REACHING ADVERSE EFFECT ON BILATERAL RELATIONS. BY THE SAME TOKEN THE NEED TO REACH AN AGREEMENT INHIBITS ADVENTURIST BEHAVIOR WHICH COULD UPSET THE NEGOTIATIONS. THUS THE FACT THAT NEGOTIATIONS ARE IN PROGRESS AND THAT WE BOTH ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THEIR SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION IS A STABILIZING FACTOR AND THEIR FAILURE COULD HAVE THE OPPOSITE EFFECT.

4. IN CONSIDERING OUR OWN POLICY OBJECTIVES IN THE COMING YEAR FOLLOWING POINTS HAVE BEEN RAISED ON WHICH EMBASSY COMMENT WOULD BE WELCOME:

A. NEGOTIATION OF SUCCESSFUL SALT II AGREEMENT. AGREE ENTIRELY THAT THIS SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE HIGHEST PRIORITY GOAL.

B. ALTHOUGH MFN/CREDITS ISSUE REMAINS IMPORTANT TO
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SOVIETS BOTH SIDES HAVE ADJUSTED TO SITUATION SINCE JANUARY. QUESTION WHICH ARISES IS WHETHER EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE REGARDLESS OF PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESS. WE HAVE NOTED COMMENTS WHICH SEEM TO STEM EXCLUSIVELY FROM MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE SOURCES TO EFFECT THAT AN ATTEMPT WHICH FAILED WOULD BE BETTER THAN NO ATTEMPT AT ALL. CONSENSUS HERE IS THAT THIS VIEW IS PROBABLY NOT SHARED BY TOP LEVEL POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN MOSCOW IN VIEW OF EFFECT ANOTHER ACERBIC DEBATE ON DETENTE AND EMIGRATION WOULD HAVE ON US/USSR RELATIONS. CLIMATE IN CONGRESS WOULD BE IMPROVED BY:

-- SOVIET SHOW OF FLEXIBILITY ON EMIGRATION QUESTION BY

PERMITTING LEVEL OF EMIGRATION TO INCREASE WHILE
PERMITTING PROMINENT "REFUSENIKS" TO LEAVE.

-- SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF SALT AGREEMENT AND A GOOD
WASHINGTON SUMMIT.

-- PROGRESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND

-- STABILIZATION OF SITUATION IN PORTUGAL COUPLED WITH
SOVIET DISPLAY OF RESTRAINT.

GIVEN SOME OR ALL OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS WE BELIEVE
PASSAGE OF REMEDIAL LEGISLATION IS POSSIBLE IN THIS
SESSION OF CONGRESS.

C. (1) OUR WARNINGS ABOUT FISHING IN TROUBLED WATERS
UNDERLINE POINT THAT MOVES TO EXPLOIT SITUATIONS TO GAIN
UNILATERAL ADVANTAGE CAN UNRAVEL DETENTE. WE FACE A
PROBLEM, HOWEVER, IN DEALING WITH SITUATIONS SUCH AS
PORTUGAL WHERE THE INTERNAL DYNAMIC IS CRUCIAL.

(2) CSCE SUMMIT AND WASHINGTON SUMMIT HAVE BOTH ACTED
AS SHORT TERM RESTRAINTS ON SOVIET BEHAVIOR. WITH CSCE
BEHIND US, IT BECOMES INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT TO ESTIMATE
SOVIET MOTIVES AFTER THESE MILESTONES HAVE BEEN PASSED.
WE HAVE LOOKED TO EXPANDING TRADE TO PROVIDE INCENTIVES
FOR RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR AND TO A DEGREE SOVIET DESIRE
FOR TECHNOLOGY AND ASSISTANCE IN JOINT VENTURES REMAINS
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A MODEST PLUS IN DETENTE CALCULUS. BUT WE MAY BE
LOOKING AHEAD TO A TIME WHEN ISSUES ARE INCREASINGLY
"DECOUPLED" AND WE CANNOT COUNT ON MOMENTUM OF IMPROVING
RELATIONSHIP TO CARRY US OVER DIFFICULT PERIODS IN OUR
RELATIONSHIP. IN SUCH AN ATMOSPHERE WE ARE FINDING IT
INCREASINGLY NECESSARY TO RECOGNIZE A LARGER SOVIET ROLE
IN CERTAIN AREAS (E.G. ASIA, INDIAN OCEAN, MIDDLE EAST)
BY CONSULTING WITH THEM MORE CLOSELY AS THE INCENTIVE
FOR RESTRAINT.

D. THIS POINT CROSSES OVER INTO FOURTH OBJECTIVE POSITED
BY EMBASSY--OFFERING SOVIETS MORE OF THE PERQUISITES AND
EXACTING MORE OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A GREAT POWER.
WE SHARE THIS VIEW, BUT FIND IT EASIER TO ACCEPT IN THE
ABSTRACT THAN WHEN IT IS APPLIED IN SPECIFIC CASES. WHEN
WE ARE CONSIDERING MORE TRADITIONAL FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES
COUNTER-ARGUMENTS ARE ADVANCED TO EFFECT THAT:

(1) BILATERAL SUPER-POWER APPROACH TO PROBLEMS IS UN-
POPULAR WITH ALLIES AND THIRD WORLD.

(2) SOVIETS CANNOT OR WILL NOT CONTRIBUTE ANYTHING TO

SOLUTION OF PROBLEM BUT WILL SIMPLY CONTINUE TO PUSH FOR UNILATERAL ADVANTAGE FROM ADVANCED POSITION.

(3) TIMING IS WRONG SINCE GIVING THE SOVIETS MORE OF A ROLE WOULD SIMPLY BE INTERPRETED AS WEAKNESS WHICH IN TURN WOULD NOT PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE SOVIET BEHAVIOR.

IN DISCUSSIONS OF NEW ISSUES OF GLOBAL INTERDEPENDENCE--FOOD, ENERGY AND COMMODITIES--ONE RUNS INTO SIMILAR PROBLEMS IN GOING FROM GENERAL TO SPECIFIC:

(1) BRINGING SOVIETS INTO EVOLVING INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ONLY MAXIMIZES THEIR DISRUPTIVE POTENTIAL SINCE, EXCEPT IN THE CASE OF FOOD WHERE THEIR OWN SELF-INTEREST DICTATES A RESPONSIBLE APPROACH, THE TEMPTATIONS OF DEMAGOGUERY OUTWEIGH FORESEEABLE REWARDS OF A CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH.

(2) SOVIET-TYPE ECONOMIES CANNOT MESH WELL WITH INTERNATIONAL SECRET

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TIONAL ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS BASED ON MARKET PRINCIPLE AND THUS THEIR INVOLVEMENT IS AT BEST IRRELEVANT AND AT WORST DISRUPTIVE.

(3) AS A LARGELY SELF-SUFFICIENT ENTITY WITH AN IDEOLOGICAL COMMITMENT TO EXPLOITING ECONOMIC DISLOCATIONS IN THE WEST THE ISSUE OF INTERDEPENDENCE MAY HAVE NO REAL APPEAL IN MOSCOW.

WE DO NOT ACCEPT THESE ARGUMENTS AS OVERRIDING BUT LIST THEM AS EVIDENCE OF THE FACT THAT PURSUIT OF OBJECTIVE D SHOULD BE SELECTIVE, THOUGH PERHAPS IN LONGER TERM A MORE BASIC DECISION MUST BE MADE--THAT GREATER SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN NEW AND OLD ISSUES IS DESIRABLE REGARDLESS OF SHORT-TERM POTENTIAL DISADVANTAGES AND THAT WE SHOULD MOVE AHEAD EVEN IN AREAS WHERE WE CAN SEE MORE IMMEDIATE LOSSES THAN GAINS.

E. IN DISCUSSION OF FIFTH OBJECTIVE, PRESSING THROUGH ESTABLISHED CHANNELS FOR EXPANDED CONTACTS, THERE WAS SOME DISCUSSION OF EFFECT THIS MIGHT HAVE ON SOVIET SOCIETY AND RELATED ISSUE OF EXTENT TO WHICH SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL EXCHANGE REALLY HELPS SOVIETS OUT OF DILEMMA CREATED BY LABOR SHORTAGE AND DESIRE TO AVOID REAL ECONOMIC REFORM. IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT SOVIET LEADERSHIP MAY HAVE FEWER ILLUSIONS ABOUT IMPORTANCE OF TECHNOLOGY IMPORTS FROM WEST THAN WE DO AND THAT THE PRICE THEY MAY BE WILLING TO PAY--POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY--MAY BE SMALLER THAN IS GENERALLY THOUGHT. QUESTION WAS ALSO RAISED WHETHER FROM NARROW NATIONAL INTEREST POINT OF VIEW WE REALLY WANT TO INFLUENCE SOVIET SOCIETY IN DIRECTION

OF LIBERALIZATION SINCE THIS COULD STRENGTHEN SOCIAL FABRIC. IN ANY CASE IT WAS THE GENERAL CONSENSUS THAT STRENGTHENING AND BETTER COORDINATION OF NETWORK OF INTER-RELATIONSHIP AND COMMUNICATIONS RESULTING FROM SUMMITS SHOULD BE OUR OBJECTIVE.

5. PROBLEM OF PROVIDING EMBASSY WITH RESOURCES IT NEEDS TO FULFILL ITS RESPONSIBILITIES WAS ALSO DISCUSSED AT MEETING. PROBLEMS OF TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT FOR
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EXPANDED PRESENCE IN USSR WAS ALSO DISCUSSED AND MEMO FOR DIRECTOR GENERAL SENT SUMMARIZING SOME OF CONSENSUS EXPRESSED. INGERSOLL

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